

REMARKS

New claims 24 and 25 have been added. These claims describe, among other things, a light guide plate having a planar light exit surface and a wedge-like reflecting surface opposite the light exit surface. The wedge-like reflecting surface is formed so that the thickness of the light guide plate is smaller at both end faces and becomes greater in essential part thereof. The reflecting surface is planar from each end faces to the central part. Claim 24 further describes that prism-like features are formed on the reflecting surface at predetermined angles, and claim 25 further describes that a light-scattering element is formed on the reflecting surface. Consideration on the merit of the new claims is respectfully requested.

Claims 20-23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Nakabayashi et al. (US 6,379,017) in view of Kuratomi et al. (US 6,791,566). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection because the cited reference, alone or in combination, do not disclose or suggest the claimed curved reflecting surface opposite the light exit surface, or the light-scattering element formed on the curved reflecting surface.

The Examiner refers to Fig. 23C of Nakabayashi as disclosing the curved reflecting surface. As previously discussed, Fig. 23C of Nakabayashi merely discloses two sections of a light guide member 203 that are attached to form a middle portion. The reference clearly and expressly states that the sloped top faces 311 and 312 of the light guide member 203 are flat (flat portion 243). Accordingly, the top faces 311 and 312 are at an angle with respect to each other and the bottom faces 321 and 322 (which output the light

reflected by grooves 243 in the top surfaces 311 and 312). This is clearly shown in Fig. 23C. Since the flat top surfaces 311 and 312 form an angle with respect to each other, they cannot be curved. By definition, a curve is “a line having no straight part or a bent having no angular part.” Accordingly, the top faces 311 and 312 of the light guide member 203 cannot be interpreted to be a curved surface. Therefore, even if combined with Kuratomi et al., the combination still would not disclose or suggest the curved reflecting surface, since Kuratomi et al. also does not disclose or suggest the curved reflecting surface opposite the light exit surface.

Moreover, even if Nakabayashi et al. were combined with Kuratomi et al., the resulting combination still would not disclose or suggest a light-scattering element being formed on a curved reflecting surface. Figs. 2 and 3 of Kuratomi show scattering microdots 16 being formed on a light guiding plate 19. As clearly seen in Fig. 2, the light guiding plate has a planar surface opposite a planar light exit surface. Accordingly, even if the teachings of Kuratomi et al. were combined with Nakabayashi et al., the resulting device would include scattering microdots being formed on flat or planar surfaces that are at an angle with respect to each other. It would not disclose or suggest a light-scattering element formed on a curved reflecting surface, as in the present invention. For this reason, claims 20-23 are allowable over the cited references. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

In response to Applicants previously filed Amendment, the Examiner states that “[w]hile Nakabayashi does label Section 243 as ‘flat portions’ this does not mean that none of the light reflecting surfaces of Fig. 23C are curved. Specifically, the middle of the

light guide plate seems to be quite clearly curved from the drawings.” The Examiner’s interpretation is clearly contrary to the express teachings of the cited reference, which disclose that the surfaces are flat. Applicants respectfully submit that the Examiner’s position is improper.

The Examiner also states that the slope 131 of a light guide member 30 shown in Fig. 14 “can be joined in similar fashion to that shown in Fig. 23C.” Applicants respectfully submit that there is no suggestion in the reference for combining the features of Fig. 14 with that of Fig. 23C. Also, the curved slope 131 of Fig. 14 is provided on the light exiting side of the light guide member. Therefore, even if the features of Fig. 14 were combined with Fig. 23C, the light exiting side of the bottom face 321, 322 would be curved, but not the light reflecting surface, as called for in the claims. For all of the reasons provided above, claims 20-23 are allowable over the cited references, alone or in combination. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.


For all of the above reasons, Applicants request reconsideration and allowance of the claimed invention. The Examiner should contact Applicants’ undersigned attorney if a telephone conference would expedite prosecution.

If a Petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.136(a) for an extension of time for response is required to make the attached response timely, it is hereby petitioned under 37 C.F.R. §1.136(a) for an extension of time for response in the above-identified application for the period required to make the attached response timely. The Commissioner is hereby

authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required to this Application under 37
C.F.R. §§1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 07-2069.

Respectfully submitted,

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